

Interview with Dave Blanchette

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Interviewer: Julie Dirksen – ALPL Oral History Program

Dirksen: The other sites too. I mean, it's not that this was just all about the museum and the library, all the other historic sites.

Blanchette: In fact, it was mostly about the other sites, and the library/museum was a site. The Old State Capitol saw its visitation triple, I think, during a short timeframe. Lincoln Home numbers are astronomical. And each of those had a huge role. Lincoln Tomb, a lot of visitors there. So, the library/museum was a big site for the bicentennial, but it wasn't the only site. And let's not forget that the three times that Barack Obama was here, during his campaign for presidency and as president, none of them were at the museum. Two of them were at the Old State Capitol.

Dirksen: Yes.

Blanchette: You know, President Obama realizes, as do a lot of people, the importance of direct connection with an actual historic site. You know, the museum tells the story of history. The sites are history. So, having an event at the site is a direct connection to history. But, at the same time, you come into the museum, you get excited about history, and you want to go to that original site. It gets the juices flowing. It gets you excited and then you [sound of taking off]. It's the starting gate, and you get out of the starting gate, and you go on your journey of discovery.